

**News Release**  
**U.S. Department of Justice**  
*United States Attorney*  
*District of Rhode Island*



**February 14, 2005**



## **Providence man admits illegally possessing a handgun**

**Eugenio Vasquez**, 29, of Providence, has pleaded guilty to being a felon in possession of a firearm, admitting that he had a handgun in his car when Providence Police detectives stopped it in June.

United States Attorney Robert Clark Corrente announced the guilty plea, which Vasquez entered on February 11 before Chief U.S. District Court Judge Ernest C. Torres in U.S. District Court, Providence.

At the plea hearing, Assistant U.S. Attorney Luis M. Matos said that, had the case gone to trial, the government would have proven that, on June 23, detectives stopped a car that Vasquez was driving and seized a nine millimeter pistol from between the driver and passenger seats. The gun had a round in its chamber and seven rounds in its magazine.

Vasquez, of 25 Camden Avenue, was convicted in 1996 for assault with intent to murder and, as a felon, is prohibited from possessing firearms. The statutory maximum penalty for being a felon in possession of a firearm is ten years in federal prison and a \$250,000 fine. Vasquez is detained pending sentencing, which is scheduled for May 13.

**Providence Police** and the **Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives** investigated the case. Assistant U.S. Attorney Matos is prosecuting it as part of **Project Safe**

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**Neighborhoods**, a Department of Justice initiative against gun crimes. Under Project Safe Neighborhoods, the U.S. Attorney's Office, working with Providence Police, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office, and other agencies, aggressively prosecutes federal firearms offenses in an effort to incarcerate those responsible for gun violence and deter others from committing gun crimes. Since 2001, federal firearms prosecutions in Rhode Island have more than doubled and gun offenders have been sentenced to a total of more than 550 years in federal prison.

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